

NATIONAL INTEGRATED BALLISTICS INFORMATION NETWORK

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Executive Board Members

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TO ALL NIBIN DRUGFIRE AND IBIS PARTNERS:

The NIBIN Board is pleased to announce that the ATF and the FBI have merged their ballistic imaging technology programs into a single jointly managed program with a single unified computer system. This merger was formalized by the signing of a memorandum of understanding before the Attorney General of the United States on December 2, 1999. The merger ensures the sharing of program responsibilities based upon melding of the strengths and resources of both agencies. The ATF is responsible for Crime Gun Operations such as hardware, software, training, security, maintenance, database maintenance, etc. The FBI responsibilities include the establishment of a nationwide network based upon a secure, high speed communications vehicle; as well as the development and deployment of ancillary databases to support firearms examiners.

The unified computer system is an enhancement of the existing IBIS system which will combine the best features of both systems: IBIS automated input and correlation with DRUGFIRE comparison microscope-like image display. We will deploy the new unified system in a systematic manner seeking to increase the number of hits while simultaneously decreasing the cost per hit. DRUGFIRE systems will be incrementally phased out by the deployment of the new unified systems. The FBI will maintain DRUGFIRE systems during the redeployment phase of this restructuring. Those cases in DRUGFIRE databases which are the most significant will be reimaged into the new system format. The ATF and FBI will jointly seek funding to cover the costs of efficiently uniting these programs in the shortest possible time.


The NIBIN Executive Board's initial efforts focused on achieving interoperability. This was a collaborative effort which involved respected members of the firearm examiner community, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and the major vendors of both programs. Over time, it became apparent that a single imaging technology would be a far superior solution to that of creating an image "exchange" mechanism for interoperability. A single unified imaging system solution will eliminate the need for any "middleman" program on image exchange, with its inherent problems and limitations in keeping two different systems "in sync" whenever new features are developed for either system. Most importantly, a single unified system will facilitate

Reducing Violent Crime Through Partnerships and Innovation

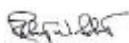
future acquisition and optimal use of resources for taking ballistic imaging technology to the next level.

In the weeks to come, many of you will be contacted for your advice and expertise as we work collectively to establish the most efficient National Integrated Ballistics Information Network. In addition, we will make every effort to ensure that your agencies are kept abreast of each phase of the process. Your continued support in this endeavor is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



William M. Casey



Robert W. Sibert



Jimmy Wooten